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## SOFA CHICAGO: CONNECT

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## SOFA CHICAGO MARKS 20TH ANNUAL FAIR WITH DEBUT OF CONNECT New Student Design Environments and Competition Features Top U.S. and International Art and Design Programs

**NOVEMBER 1-3, 2013 NAVY PIER**  
**Opening Night Preview Thursday, October 31**

### For Immediate Release

Online Press Room:  
[www.sofaexpo.com/press](http://www.sofaexpo.com/press)

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CHICAGO – Celebrating its 20th annual presentation in 2013, **SOFA CHICAGO**, the world's foremost fair devoted to **Sculpture Objects Functional Art + Design**, marks its landmark year with the debut of **CONNECT**, a student design exhibition and competition. Presented alongside nearly 70 galleries, the five unique design environments created by top art and design schools will be on display throughout the fair at Navy Pier's Festival Hall November 1-3, 2013.

"CONNECT is an exciting new component of the fair that will highlight the innovation that is occurring in design at these schools," says SOFA CHICAGO director Donna Davies. "When you celebrate 20 years, it's not only a time to reflect upon the past, it's an essential time to look forward. CONNECT is an opportunity to look ahead at what trends are coming in design."



The winning CONNECT installation, selected by a jury of design experts, will be announced at SOFA CHICAGO's Opening Night Preview on October 31. SOFA CHICAGO's sponsor of nine straight years, **Chubb Personal Insurance**, is also sponsoring the launch of CONNECT, awarding a \$2,500 prize to the winning school.

Selected by SOFA CHICAGO to participate in the inaugural CONNECT exhibition and competition, the five schools include **Edinburgh College of Art (eca)**, the **University of Edinburgh** (Edinburgh, Scotland); **Illinois Institute of Technology** (Chicago, IL); **Pratt Institute** (Brooklyn, NY); **University of California, Davis** (Davis, CA); and **University of Iowa** (Iowa City, IA). The schools will present immersive installations, located throughout the fair, where SOFA CHICAGO visitors can relax and talk while engaging with the schools and their unique environments. All of the seating, lighting, and design elements comprising each 576-square-foot environment will be created by students, under the guidance of faculty advisors.

CONNECT schools are also invited to collaborate with the internationally renowned **Corning Museum of Glass (CMOG)**. Each school will submit proposals for unique design objects to be executed in glass based on the theme of "Celebrating 20 Years." CMOG will select three winning concepts for its glass artists to create. Two pieces will be made prior to the fair and the top design will be created on-site at SOFA CHICAGO during CMOG's Hot Glass Roadshow demonstration program on Friday, November 1. The winning designers will join the CMOG artists on stage to experience the process firsthand. All three winning CONNECT glass design objects will be displayed at SOFA CHICAGO in the Chubb Personal Insurance booth.

Chief Operating Officer of Chubb Personal Insurance Kathleen Tierney says "Chubb is delighted to be part of SOFA CHICAGO's 20th annual presentation and the new CONNECT exhibition and competition. SOFA has always introduced the very best in art and design to collectors and the five unique CONNECT environments will showcase the art and design masters of the future in a way we haven't seen before."

Asked how this year's CONNECT schools were chosen, Davies explains, "We selected a group of top art and design schools whose programs are exploring exciting new concepts in design and technology. They are bringing fresh, new perspectives to the fair and it's important to us to highlight each school's curriculum while supporting the artists and designers of tomorrow."



Corning Museum of Glass works collaboratively in their Glass Lab with artist Wendell Castle

~more~

## CONNECT 2013 – Participating Schools

**Edinburgh College of Art (eca), University of Edinburgh's** CONNECT installation will be designed by students in its Jewelry & Silversmithing department, which is located within the Edinburgh College of Art's internationally renowned School of Design. According to department head Stephen Bottomley, the School of Design wanted to participate in CONNECT "to develop new and exciting international partnerships with galleries, schools and collectors, while also attracting bright new students to join us for study in Scotland." Taking inspiration from Bauhaus traditions as well as the practical 'make do' and 'thrifty' cultures, Bottomley notes that "eca's CONNECT display will incorporate bespoke shipping cases reapplied as exhibition plinths and seating, alongside the exhibits that have a special focus on showcasing the work of recent Jewelry & Silversmithing alumni in an exhibit which is striking, practical and utilitarian."

Guided by **Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)** College of Architecture Studio Associate Professor John DeSalvo, AIA, IIT graduate students will create an installation that refers to the Chicago area's distinctive neighborhoods including Miller Beach, a 19th century artist enclave and leisure destination for visitors from Chicago. With a particular focus on reimagining the identity of this historic South Shore community in nearby Gary, Indiana, the IIT team will be designing and fabricating "Urban Elements" that will embody their ideas for the neighborhood. DeSalvo adds that "we hope these elements will become catalysts for positive change in this community and will further the conversation about how to revitalize post-industrial communities such as Miller Beach."

Developed by interior design students and recent graduates, the **Pratt Institute's** CONNECT lounge is inspired by the iconic art and architecture of the city of Chicago. Pratt Institute Associate Professor Deborah Schneiderman, RA, LEED AP, says that "unexpected material salvaged on campus and images of some of Chicago's most iconic designs were manipulated and abstracted to create the installation. The juxtaposition of the installation's two elements references SOFA CHICAGO's objective of providing a market for artists who are interested in combining traditional decorative arts with functional objects. We hope that visitors who return to Pratt's CONNECT lounge during the course of the fair will discover not only the process of the installation's design, but also the subtle shifts that occur over time."

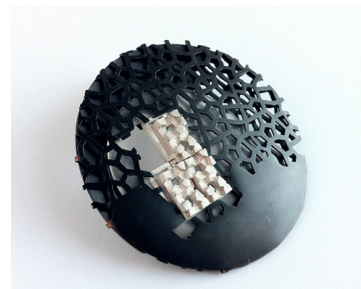
**University of California, Davis (UC Davis)** Assistant Professor Brett Snyder, AIA, says the Department of Design is "excited to participate in CONNECT because we know there will be a wide variety of backgrounds represented and it's an opportunity for us to get support, make connections, and get critical feedback on the work we are doing." An underutilized outdoor space on the UC Davis campus is shaping his students' CONNECT design, which will reflect their ideas about education and conserving resources. Students across the disciplines of landscape architecture, textiles and design will consider ways to channel campus waste and discarded materials to create outdoor rooms that Snyder says will provide a "platform for experimentation."

**University of Iowa's (UI)** 3D Design Program students advised by Associate Professor Monica Correia take inspiration for their multimedia installation from a drawing of a storm cloud by Leonardo da Vinci. The CONNECT space designed by UI students will create a unique environment where the natural world and the technological world live in harmony. Utilizing sustainable wood, lights and sensors, the space will feature unique seating, forms abstracted from the drawings, lighting and audio elements. Professor Correia states "SOFA is such an important international event that our school usually goes every year. I was really impressed when I saw that the fair would dedicate space to design schools. We strive for everyone who walks through our CONNECT environment to feel renewed after the experience."

Each design team will also submit an essay about their installation which will be available online at [sofaexpo.com](http://sofaexpo.com). A synopsis of each CONNECT project will be included in the SOFA CHICAGO catalog and faculty advisors from each school will participate in a CONNECT panel discussion led by Tim Parsons, Associate Professor in Designed Objects at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) as part of SOFA's signature lecture series.

While CONNECT is new, Davies emphasizes that design and education have always been essential to SOFA CHICAGO. "This is another element of educational outreach which has always been an important part of SOFA, though one that surely will enhance the experience of every SOFA CHICAGO visitor." Davies stresses that each installation will be "a place for the students and faculty to connect with the patrons of the fair, and for the patrons of the fair to have a place to relax, have discussions and reflect on what they have seen at SOFA while learning more about these exciting design environments and the respective schools."

For more information about CONNECT and other updates on SOFA's exhibitors and programs, visit [sofaexpo.com](http://sofaexpo.com) or call 800.563.SOFA (7632).



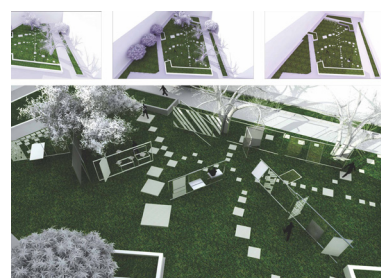
Alice Chung, *Hand held Object*  
Edinburgh College of Art (eca),  
University of Edinburgh



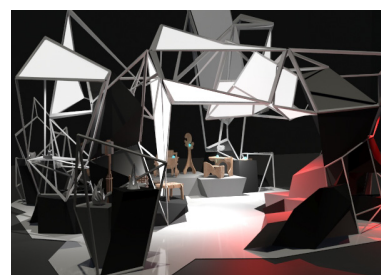
Illinois Institute of Technology  
CONNECT rendering



Pratt Institute CONNECT rendering



University of California, Davis  
CONNECT rendering



University of Iowa  
CONNECT rendering

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#### **SOFA CHICAGO 2013 Dates & Times:**

Opening Night Preview\*

Thursday, October 31: 5 to 9 p.m. VIP Passholders only

7 to 9 p.m. Public Preview \$50 tickets available

The Opening Night Preview is much anticipated by collectors, museum curators, art advisors, interior designers and architects, artists and cognoscenti, because it offers first viewing and the best selection of outstanding masterworks as well as the opportunity to meet and mingle with leading members of the art and design communities. Wine and light hors d'oeuvres are included in the price of Opening Night admission.

#### **General Admission Hours**

Friday, November 1: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday, November 2: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Sunday, November 3: Noon to 6 p.m.

General Admission includes admission to the fair, related lecture series, special exhibits and events.

#### **Tickets**

\*Opening Night Public Preview: \$50

General Admission: \$15

Three-Day Pass: \$25

Students/Seniors/Groups (10 or more with advanced reservations): \$12

Tickets for all SOFA CHICAGO events, including the Opening Night Preview are available online or at the door. Cash and credit cards (VISA, American Express & MasterCard) are accepted.

#### **ABOUT SOFA CHICAGO**

Founded in 1994, SOFA CHICAGO (Sculpture Objects Functional Art + Design) is Chicago's longest continuously running art fair and the world's foremost fair dedicated to studio glass, ceramics, wood, fiber and metal. During the past two decades, SOFA CHICAGO has grown to attract more than 30,000 visitors every year and exhibitors from the U.S. and around the world. During its 20-year history, SOFA shows have also been presented in New York as SOFA NEW YORK and in Santa Fe as SOFA WEST. The fair's dynamic artist talks, demonstrations and special exhibitions have made it an indispensable meeting place for artists, collectors, dealers, curators and scholars. SOFA CHICAGO is still produced by its original cofounders, Mark Lyman and his wife Anne Meszko through their association with The Art Fair Company, Inc. In June 2013, SOFA CHICAGO was purchased by show management company Urban Expositions as the flagship event for the new art and design fair division it plans to develop. Urban Expositions will assume all management duties for SOFA CHICAGO at the completion of the 2013 edition.

